

# Trade Notes...

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## U.S. and Japan Reach Agreement on Organic Trade

The Japanese Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF) has agreed to allow USDA-accredited organizations to approve organic food and beverage ingredients for export to Japan.

This should improve access to the Japanese organic market by greatly reducing the expense and difficulty of approving products for sale in Japan. Prior to this agreement, only MAFF-registered certifying organizations (RCO) based in Japan could approve U.S. organic products, typically through costly inspections by RCO officials.

The agreement is expected to help facilitate trade in processed ingredients such as frozen juices and vegetables, sauces, and pastes, as well as bulk commodities including soybean and wheat.

The proposal accepted by MAFF is an interim measure designed to facilitate trade as USDA and MAFF continue negotiations on equivalency between the U.S. National Organic Program and MAFF. The measure will expire on March 31, 2002, or upon implementation of an equivalency agreement, whichever comes first.

## U.S. Kosher Foods Make Bid for Growing Niche Market

The kosher food market is one of the fastest growing niche markets in France. U.S. companies participating in the first European kosher show, Eurokosherfest, held in Paris, project \$800,000 in sales over 12 months, way beyond their initial expectations. Of the 15 U.S. exhibitors, 10 were sponsored by Food Export-USA Northeast while 5 were sponsored by the organizer of Kosherfest U.S.A.

In total, 200 exhibitors from Europe, the United States and Israel participated, along with about 3,000 buyers and distributors from Europe. Products featured were wines, baby foods, fruit juices, nuts, pizzas, waffles, ice cream, pasta, candies, chocolates, vegetarian dishes, gefilte fish, fish entrees, dairy products, soups, condiments and dairy products. Ice cream by Bernie's Foods of Brooklyn, N.Y., was singled out for its high quality and good packaging. In appreciation, the firm is entitled to use a special logo on its product, "K-d'Or" (in French, 'golden kosher'). Special seminars at Eurokosherfest provided information on marketing kosher foods in Europe.

## Native American and Louisiana Foods Also Do Well in Paris

At the Paris Ethnic and Specialty Food Show, the Louisiana Department of Agriculture presented ethnic products from 16 companies, featuring such products as olive oil, Louisiana hot sauces, Cajun dishes, marinades, seasonings, pancake and biscuit mixes and Tex-Mex foods. The Intertribal Agricultural Council (IAC) presented information about Native American agriculture and offered demonstrations of traditional Native American meals and recipes. The IAC exhibited buffalo meat, wild rice, maple syrup, fish, dried and fresh fruits, soup mixes and flour. U.S. companies made contacts with representatives of the retail and food service sector from France, other European countries and New Caledonia.